

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6203

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 14360

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, UK, UR, XF

SUBJECT: FOREIGN SECRETARY VISIT TO MOSCOW

REF: MOSCOW 15149; MOSCOW 15150

1. ON DECEMBER 6, WE TALKED WITH FCO OFFICERS BULLARD AND BRAITHWAITE (BOTH OF WHOM ACCOMPANIED FOREIGN SECRETARY) ABOUT SIR ALEC DOUGLAS-HOME'S VISIT TO MOSCOW. BOTH CONFIRMED THAT VISIT WAS A "RED CARPET" OCCASION WITH SOVIETS ON THEIR BEST BEHAVIOR AND AVOIDING EMBARRASSING ASPECTS OF ANGLO-SOVIET RELATIONS. THEY REPORTED THAT LITTLE OF SUBSTANCE ON SPECIFIC ISSUES WAS ACHIEVED BY THE VISIT BUT FELT THAT A MUCH BETTER TONE FOR FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WAS ESTABLISHED.

2. THEIR VIEW IS THAT SINCE THE 1971 EXPULSION OF SOVIET DIPLOMATS FROM THE UK, THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN TRYING TO ISOLATE BRITAIN AS THE BAD GUY OF EUROPE. WHEN THIS FAILED BECAUSE UK IS A PART OF ALL EUROPEAN
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ORGANIZATIONS, PRESENT AT ALL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

AND GENERALLY ACTIVE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, SOVIETS DECIDED TO TRY A CARROT APPROACH. BRAITHWAITE SAID THAT IT WAS MOST PLEASANT EXPERIENCE TO HAVE SOVIETS COURTING THE UK. BUT BOTH FCO OFFICERS SAID THAT SIR ALEC HAD MADE POINT TO SOVIETS THAT WHILE BILATERAL RELATIONS MAY IMPROVE, THE BRITISH ARE NOT SO EAGER FOR DETENTE THAT THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO SACRIFICE ANY PART OF CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN NEW, WARMER ATMOSPHERE. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE WERE ALLOWED TO READ AMBASSADOR GARVEY'S REPORTING TELEGRAM ON VISIT WHICH WAS ALMOST A REPEAT OF MOSCOW'S 15149.

3. BULLARD SAID THAT DRAFTING OF COMMUNIQUE PROVIDED ONE OF MOST INTERESTING SIDELIGHTS OF VISIT. IN PREPARATORY DISCUSSIONS ON VISIT, SOVIETS HAD AGREED TO LET BRITISH PREPARE DRAFT COMMUNIQUE. ABOUT TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE VISIT, SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIAL SEMENOV HAD APPROACHED THE FCO WITH A DRAFT COMMUNIQUE WHICH HE SAID WAS ONLY AN EMBASSY DRAFT. THE FCO FOUND THE DRAFT MUCH TOO LONG AND FULL OF CLICHES. THE BRITISH COUNTERED WITH A ONE PAGE DRAFT OF THEIR OWN. ON ARRIVAL IN MOSCOW, THE BRITISH FOUND THAT NEITHER DRAFT HAD BEEN SUBMITTED TO MOSCOW. THE SOVIETS APPEARED TO BE UNPREPARED FOR DRAFTING WHICH TOOK HALF OF ONE NIGHT AND ENDED WITH BRITISH BEING SATISFIED.

4. BOTH OFFICERS GAVE US THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE WAS A LACK OF SUBSTANTIVE PREPARATION ON PART OF SOVIETS FOR TALKS. BULLARD SHOWED US A LIST OF NINE OR TEN ITEMS WHICH BRITISH HAD EXPECTED SOVIETS TO RAISE BUT WHICH WERE NOT DISCUSSED. BRAITHWAITE SAID THAT GROMYKO APPEARED TO BE RECITING STANDARD SOVIET LINE, IN AFFABLE MANNER, WITHOUT BEING BRIEFED ON LATEST DEVELOPMENTS. HE SAID GROMYKO TOOK FIRM LINE ON ONLY TWO SUBJECTS, HUMAN CONTACTS IN CSCE AND ACTIVITIES OF RESPECTIVE EMBASSIES IN LONDON AND MOSCOW. BULLARD SAID THAT PARAGRAPHS TEN AND ELEVEN IN COMMUNIQUE, ON DISARMAMENT AND INDO-CHINA, WERE SUGGESTED BY SOVIET DRAFTERS BUT WERE NOT EVEN RAISED BY SOVIET SIDE UNTIL HE SUGGESTED THAT SINCE THEY HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED THEY SHOULD NOT

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BE INCLUDED.

5. BOTH BRAITHWAITE AND BULLARD EMPHASIZED THAT LACK OF SUBSTANCE OR CONTROVERSY IN TALKS DID NOT MEAN THAT THEY WERE NOT SIGNIFICANT. MOST IMPORTANT FACT IS THAT THE VISIT DID TAKE PLACE PROVIDING BASIS FOR BETTER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTRIES AT LEAST IN NEAR TERM. VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER HEATH TO USSR IN 1974 SHOULD FURTHER

REINFORCE WARMING OF RELATIONS.

6. NEITHER BULLARD NOR BRAITHWAITE WAS IN POSITION TO REPORT ON MIDDLE EAST PORTION OF TALKS. WE ARE SEEING FCO OFFICER CRAIG, WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS PORTION OF VISIT AND WILL REPORT LATER.

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